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CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH AN ENGLISHMAN'S HOUSE IS NOT HIS CASTLE.

WHEN we first took possession of No. 2 Albert Villas, what a delightful prospect lay before us! Agreeably situated, not quite out of town, and yet not in it; away from the smoke and din, in a pleasant little world of our own; with fresh air for the children, and delightful walks into the now easily attainable country; what could have been better? So very convenient, too, it was to find that every requisite of domestic economy would be brought to the door by the kind-hearted venders! I did not think that remark of mine called forth any ecstasy from the household authorities, which at the time rather surprised me; but, in the emphatic words of the Artful Dodger, I was 'so jolly green, you know.' Beautiful in its neatness and simplicity, and in the quietness and repose which would be obtainable there after the worry of business, I was about to enjoy—after office-hours, of course—a veritable retreat.

During the first fortnight, indeed, whenever I happened to be at home, I was disturbed by the incessant ringing of the door-bell, but I concluded that probably my family had not quite 'settled down,' as the phrase is: there were little matters connected with the furnishing department, perhaps, not finally arranged. By and by, there would be peace. 'By and by!' I look back upon myself, indulging as I was in a hope so forlorn, with sardonic enjoyment. My little boy once asked me anxiously, on the occasion of my putting off some juvenile desire with the above idiom: 'When *is* by and by?' As the weeks rolled on, I felt disposed to ask the same question with respect to the cessation of that horrible bell. First, there was the roll-boy, whom I didn't mind; then a dozen or so of fish-venders, with each of whom there ensued an irritating wrangle before he could be induced to believe himself declined with thanks. Then the vegetable carriers and small fruit-merchants, varied by an occasional wretched old man, who required of us that we should buy bad cakes of him at double the price of good ones, because he was old! I should have thought that one reason why he ought to have done with such mercenary tricks. Then came irritating imps who would not believe that we were supplied with 'family bread,' best salt, flowers a-growin' and a-blowin'—which, by the way, were no more growing or going to grow than I was, having been stuck in for the occasion. As to itinerant merchants of all denominations, they were endless, and the worst of it was, that the march of civilisation and refinement having reached them, they no longer simply brought their wares and offered them; that is too old a dodge. No, they left polite notes in elaborate envelopes, for which—'with your esteemed order'—they would call again in the space of an hour. You might issue a general order that nothing be bought from these wandering Jews, but you can't tell your servants to take in no notes. Then there were the callers who wanted to know the way to Victoria Place, or Napoleon Buildings; or to ask if Mr John Smith lived here, and if he didn't, where did he live? And if I didn't know anything about Mr John Smith, could I direct them to some one who did? But of all worries that pluck a sensitive man's nerves to pieces, the worst is beggars!

For whole nights together I have been haunted by dismal cries and distorted faces, which were in reality only want travestied. Poverty exists, I know, but not amongst street-beggars. If you would see poverty, you must go into the wretched homes of those who work night and day to keep life and soul together, but who never think of tramping the streets for the daylight to shine upon their rags. Have you got a suburban villa, my friend, and what do you think of the beggars? Do you know the decayed opera-singer, who imitates stage-tricks for you, and represents piety? I am sorry to tell you that, as I came round by the corner gin-palace, near Victoria Place, one evening, I saw a mass of something in the gutter. I touched it with my cane; it rolled up hideous eyes at me; it opened a cavernous mouth, from which there issued thickly sounds like this: 'Go to er devil an lerrem alone.' That mass was the decayed opera-singer; and the next day she was calling down blessings upon the head of any deluded victim who might chance to fling her a half-penny. But even she is not the most irritating of her tribe. I remember one impudent young vagabond, who, when the door was closed in his face, as a mild hint that we did not receive, would lie down with his mouth to the crack, and howl out his requirements for hours, in defiance of comers and goers. Then the number of decent miners, and respectable but oppressed weavers, whom it has fallen to my lot to encourage! Sometimes they have mutilated

limbs and large families, both of which they insist upon displaying; and sometimes a gentleman of this description, having failed to hire a family, comes to the door alone—and sings! Does any one understand the force of those two words, as applied to a destitute miner or weaver?—he sings! I declare it is enough to make one envy the sleep of the marvellous Seven. I come now to a style of beggar from whom I do constantly suffer loss. This is a widow, neat and clean, but hopeless. She is not noisy, though she sings. She does not ask for anything, but walks down the street dejectedly, rolling her eyes from side to side, and at about every third step, giving vent to a prolonged note of a ditty, which I conclude is original, since I never heard anything at all like it. That spotless white kerchief, and the checked linsey apron, so exquisitely clean and comfortable-looking! Might not such a lap have nursed your infant limbs? Draw an imaginary picture of her desolate condition; think of her praiseworthy neatness in extreme poverty, and of the fact that even now she does not beg, but offers musical sounds for sale, and you are lost. *I* am, at least; for I confess that widows are a great stumbling-block to me. Thrice, I have paid the fare of a neatly-got-up old lady, with a little basket in one hand and a handkerchief in the other, in order that she may go and see her only son, who is dying. When I hear a gurgling in her throat on that last word, and see the handkerchief in motion, I know all about it, and she knows I know all about it; but yet, I can't help myself in the face of a widow's cap.

It is different in the case of a gentleman, who, with his family before him, informs the public in a voice which I can still hear, but cannot describe, that he has lost his eyesight; 'which, my friends, you may lose yours at henny time, which, therefore, I hask you how you should like it, and which I have no money, and my pore children [hired for the day] cry to me for bread [whereupon the said infants set up a dismal howl]; and I hask you to relieve them, which, if you will not, is your own fault and wickedness, and I do not care, but you will some day.' During which propitiatory address, the dismal infants worry all the door-bells they can reach, and when there is one too high for them, they howl at a chance passenger to worry it for them. And I stop my ears, and cry out that I won't bear it; I 'll cut the tongue of that bell out. An ingenious young friend of mine once succeeded in hampering it; but after that, kind-hearted mechanics were perpetually sending up to know if they might mend the door-bell; besides which, the hammering of the knocker was very little better.

I stay at home one morning for the purpose of transacting some necessary business; and here is the result. I hear the bell, but imagine naturally that there can be nothing to disturb me: I am mistaken. 'A note, sir, for you, if you please.' I do not please, but that is of no consequence at all. I open the note, which is addressed in a good business-hand to—suppose I say—John Hamilton, Esq. As I am assuming a name, I may as well have a well-sounding one. I find, 'To the Holy Land, *viâ* Italy. Grand Diorama. Herr Gottheimar begs to present Mr Hamilton with the enclosed ticket for his unrivalled entertainment. The ticket will admit three persons on their paying half-a-crown only; *without* a presentation ticket, admittance for three would be five shillings.'

I have done nothing that I know of to merit such liberality; but it is very touching. There goes the bell again. 'For you, sir, with Mr Drinkwater's compliments.' I don't know Mr Drinkwater, nor why he should send me a book. It is a pretty little book, pink, and is called *A Refreshing Shower.* I don't see what one wants with such a thing indoors myself; but let us examine. It is the history of the conversion, by the Water-cart Temperance Society, of a very ugly individual whose portrait is enclosed, gratis—as a warning, I should think. Why does the 'Water-cart' send me pink books with pictures of ugly sinners and stories of their conversion?

An hour of my precious morning is gone, and there goes the bell again. Once more it is: 'A note, if you please, sir.' I request the servant very mildly not to irritate me further by saying 'if you please,' because my pleasure has evidently nothing to do with it. No address on this envelope, only 'with Mr Van Umbug's compliments.' Is it a *carte de visite*, and who may Mr Van Umbug be? It is a card, certainly, but not a portrait. 'Mr Van Umbug presents kind regards, and will feel obliged if Mr —— will *look out his old clothes, boots*, &c., for which Mr Van U. will call in, in the space of half an hour. *N.B.*—The highest testimonials can be given.' Testimonials of what, I wonder: Mr Van Umbug's impudence? Was ever 'Old Clo' shouted in a more gentlemanly manner? He will call again in half an hour. Of course he will, and ring the bell. There it is! 'A person—no, sir, not the gentleman for that note—wishes to see you on business.'

'Tell him to go to the office.'

'He says he won't keep you a minute, sir, but he would be obliged if' &c., &c.

He comes up, and bows, and says: 'You will pardon me sir; I believe you are the chairman of the —— Institute.'

'Never heard of it.'

'Indeed! I have been misinformed then. I have heard of you, however, as a patron of learning and genius. I am, in fact, canvassing for names, and have called to ask for yours, sir.'

I looked at him; his hands were dirty, and an odour of stale tobacco reached me.

'Merely for the sake of the autograph, of course?'

'Why, no, sir; that is, not exactly. We are about to bring out a new and splendid edition of the Bible.'

'I have got a Bible,' I said grimly.

'But, excuse me, you might like'——

'Not on any account, thank you. Good-morning.'

After he had left me, I sat disfiguring my note-paper with various triangular devices, and thinking. I took counsel with my household fairies, and for many reasons we determined to relinquish the conveniences of Albert Villa, and to go further into the country. The legitimate quarter's notice was given, and 2 Albert Villas was to be let. I write of it calmly, as I have written of other circumstances under which my house was very far indeed from realising the received idea of an Englishman's castle. I had yet to learn that my previous experience was quietness compared with what might be. Morning, noon, and night there was no peace. If I chanced to move from one room to another, I stumbled upon some party in the state of being 'shewn over the house.' My privacy, or the privacy of any individual of my family, became a mere joke.

Was all the world unhoused and mad for Albert Villa? How on earth did the people get to know about it, and what *did* they want? I began to keep dreary count of the enemies who took my castle by storm; but after a time I gave that up, the head-work was too much. Were they idle people who liked the fun, or is there some unnamed mania for house-hunting? Why *did* they come? It is my firm conviction that not one of those who thronged to inspect every nook and corner of Albert Villa had the least idea of taking it. I believe that they made up parties to look at it; and certainly it was instituted as a place of rendezvous in the coolest manner by two young ladies, who came alone, and were very timid. Everything was 'very nice,' and 'would do admirably,' no doubt, but they were distracted by an *arrière pensée.* It came out at last. Their compliments to the lady of the house, and would she permit them to wait half an hour in the drawing-room, as a young gentleman had promised to meet them at

Albert Villa? Very pretty! a love appointment, probably clandestine, in my drawing-room!

Of course, they had the drawing-room to wait in, and of course, when the young gentleman made his appearance, no one disturbed the interesting trio. That room, then, being in a state of siege, or rather given up to the enemy, another exploring-party arrived, as I knew from certain sounds outside my door. Presently it opened, and a head appeared. 'Please, sir, a gentleman wants to see the study.'

'Tell him I am engaged.'

Exit head, to reappear in the twinkling of an eye: 'Please, sir, the gentleman wants to know *when* it would be convenient to you, as he couldn't think of taking a house without seeing the study.'

'Oh, if he is to come again, let him in now, that it may be done with.'

Enter gentleman, with his hat on. I go on writing with calm politeness. Gentleman screws a glass in his eye, looks at the table and under it, feels the legs as though they had been the legs of a horse, then pokes his stick in amongst the book-shelves, at which I look up.

'Ar—thought they might be false books, you know,' says gentleman. He looks round again: 'Ar—small, *very!*' Saunters to the window: 'Ar—stabling—ar—out there?'

'Yes.'

'Small, too, very—confined, wretchedly. Ar—won't be the thing for my carriage-horses—ar.'

Presently, with an 'Ar—morning,' he takes himself off, muttering that 'Mrs—ar—Something (I couldn't catch the name) should come and look at it.'

I have seen a lady go into a shop and look over all the articles the unlucky assistant pulls down for her, after which she says: 'Thank you; I'll call again, by and by.' I know what that means; consequently, I quite understood what any gentleman or lady meant by telling me Mr or Mrs Somebody should come and look at Albert Villa; it only proved that he or she wanted nothing with it, and had only been having a little amusement. The night after this gentleman's visit, a furious knocking and ringing woke me out of my first sleep, and I hastened to hold cautious parley with the besiegers through the lobby-window.

'Who's there?'

'Oh, we heard that this house was to be let; but if the family's gone to bed, it doesn't matter, we can come again.'

'Can you? That's very kind of you, I'm sure,' I responded, fastening the window rather noisily.

As after this I no longer considered any enormity impossible, I was more exasperated than surprised when, in the middle of the second lesson one Sunday, I heard a heavy breathing behind our pew, and the voice of our only male domestic, a boy, not in buttons, wheezed out: 'Please, sir, cook knows the rent, but she can't tell 'em what the taxes is, and could you come?'

REWARD AND PUNISHMENT.

Society, after all, is very like a school. It may be Imperial or Republican, it may be swayed by a Cæsar or a 'caucus,' but, in some form or other, government is a necessity of its existence. The principal duties of a nation's rulers have hitherto been esteemed to coincide pretty closely with those of the late lamented Dr Busby, to reward, restrain, and punish. Now a days, in theory at least, a fancy has sprung up that something more than all this is due from the governor to the governed. A cabinet minister is expected in our age to be a sort of Prometheus, shedding enlightenment on the masses, adjusting the safety-valves of the state, and trimming the sails of the commonwealth, so as to catch the fitful gusts of popular opinion. Yet the normal duties of the chief magistrates of a country are those of which the need is most widely felt, and to the demand for which the national conscience is in a manner moulded.

Our forefathers, the earlier life-tenants of that world which has now lapsed to us in the regular course of entail, were not remiss in their attention to the manifest necessity for repressing vice and encouraging virtue; but in their zeal they were apt to overshoot the mark; they bent the bow till it snapped. Their violent efforts to make mankind and womankind good, pious, sober, self-denying, by dint of edicts and restrictions, produced the most disastrous effects. The reaction was always terrible. It has been left for us of the nineteenth century to remove the cumbrous apparatus of manacles, chains, and strait-waistcoats, with which our blundering ancestors tried to shackle poor human nature. We have had to breach the walls, all spiked and incrusted with jagged scraps of broken glass, with which our predecessors insisted on decorating life's highway; we have sprung our forefathers' steel traps, drawn the charges of their spring-guns, filled up their pitfalls, and pensioned off old Dogberry and his brethren. This policy has been crowned, up to the present time, with signal success. But to appreciate the change, we must be fully aware of the wide gulf that separates us from the well-intentioned, but meddlesome and erring past.

I have said that society had much in common with a school. This comparison holds good in many petty details, as well as in its wider sense. Did you ever attend on one of those solemn days when Dr Swisher, just before the holidays commence, distributes prizes and commendatory speeches among the more deserving of his pupils? One by one, as their names are called, the model-boys go up to receive the richly bound books, or the great silver inkstand, or that tremendous writing-desk that contains half a hundredweight of mahogany and brass mountings. The boys blush and duck their heads; the unsuccessful pupils titter in the background, parents and guardians, proud fathers, loving mothers, fond sisters, murmur applause and delight from the cloth-covered side-benches, and Dr Swisher nods and smiles approval, with bland wisdom, from his Olympian arm-chair. How pleasant to be Hogg Major, or Sapp Senior, or Fagg Minimus, and to receive in public such gorgeously bound works, and so honourable and distinguished an ovation. This complimentary business, however, this affair of smiles and smooth words, of gifts and gay bonnets, of cake and wine, is but a very ephemeral affair at best; like the oyster-shell grottoes and Boxing-night, it is 'only once a year.' Dr Swisher's learned face is not invariably bedecked with sunshine; those beetling brows of his have a trick of frowning to some purpose, and the doctor's voice is deep and harsh, and there are lines around the doctor's firm mouth which tell of anything but smiles and serenity. Nor is the academical year quite so agreeably passed by Dr Swisher's young friends as superficial visitors on the gala-day might be apt to suppose. Hogg Major gets a prize, let us say, but those two young scapegrace brothers of his are never out of hot water. They are writing tasks for ever, a pair of Sisyphi in the stationery department. Sapp Senior will receive a copy of Virgil, whole bound in Russia leather and gold; but that formful of little urchins, whose dusty jackets shew transverse streaks of black where the usher's cane has been active, view school in a different light. And, in truth, there is much more flogging, caning, locking-up, and setting of impositions at Bircham College, than of bestowing rewards on the steady and the industrious. Master Goodchild gets a prize once a year; Master Badchild has not to wait so long for tokens of the disapprobation of his pastors and masters; Jones, the porter, is hardly able to supply the brisk demand for birchen fasces.

In society, too, the punishments bear a most immoderate proportion to the rewards. I can get myself

hanged, imprisoned, or transported beyond seas to such colonies as will oblige the Home Office by receiving me, very much more easily than I could obtain any national recognition of the most brilliant merits. If I desire a peerage, I know very well that I shall have to win dazzling victories in the battle-field; to hold high office for years, with credit and success; or, at any rate, to own many thousands a year, and return sundry members to parliament—before I can see my hope blossom into fruition. If I am more modest, and wish merely for some minor spray from the fountain of honour, such as a baronetcy or knighthood, I am aware that unless I am a general or a diplomatist, or a monster railway contractor, or mayor of a city where the sovereign deigns to dine, my chance is a frail one. But any blue-coated minister of Themis can procure me the pains and penalties attendant on a breach of law: I have but to break a window or smash a street-lamp, and Z 58 will act as Lord Chamberlain of the powers that punish, and introduce me to Nemesis. So it has ever been.

Eastern monarchs have been accustomed, from the earliest times, to bestow very sudden and startling promotion on those who pleased them, and to abase, with equal precipitation, the disgraced favourite of yesterday. Haman, Mordecai, and Daniel furnish good illustrations of this abrupt transition from the pillory to the steps of the throne, or *vice versâ*. We still read how, in Turkey and Persia, the rich and trusted minister, the general who has been loaded with favours, falls in a single day. Tear the jewelled badge from the wretch's turban, strip him of his wealth, degrade him before the people, off with him to jail! Well for him if the bastinado or the bowstring leave him the use of limbs and life. And now bring forward yonder poor man, a slave yesterday, to-day a ruler, before whom satraps shall tremble. Quick! the rubies, the shawls, the robes of state, the khillut of dignity, the high place on the silken musnud, for this is he whom the king delights to honour! And so the wheel spins. We are apt, most of us, to follow with wondering eyes the triumph of the new vizier; we do not compute how much suffering and severity must be endured as a makeweight to that proud pageant. But the imagination of kings and their courtiers was busied, from a very early date, in devising torments for offenders: hence the brazen bull of Phalaris; hence the molten gold that suffocated Crassus; hence impalement, boiling alive of human beings in caldrons of seething oil, sawing in twain, crushing under the massive feet of trained elephants, and other Oriental cruelties. The classic republicans, on the other hand, though sparing of recompense, were not very inventive in punishments. They gave but a poor crown of leaves to their bravest and best, and they did not seek, in general, to add bitterness to the doom of death. To be hemlocked out of existence was a mild ending, after all. A traitor might be walled up, and left to perish in Hellas, as in Rome the parricide was thrust into a sack containing a live cock, cat, and viper, and in this strange company flung into the sea. But the Greeks and Romans did not, till they endured the purple of empire, shew any peculiar taste for excessive barbarity.

The great Jewish punishment was that of stoning; the Romans reserved decapitation for citizens, while thieves, slaves, and foreign offenders were liable to hanging, and to the more painful death of crucifixion; and women were commonly strangled. To be reduced to slavery was a habitual penalty for rebellion, riot, or insolvency; the slave-market constantly competed with the executioner. Vestals who had infringed their vow were buried alive, as nuns, in the middle ages, were immured and left to starve; and to be pressed into the ranks of the gladiators, and devoted to the beasts, was not a rare chastisement after the Empire had begun. The Roman character, sternly simple at first, gradually became more ferocious as conquest succeeded to conquest, broil to broil, and proscription to proscription. The cruel tortures inflicted on some of the early Christians, and with which persecuting Cæsars amused the depraved multitude in the arena, would hardly have been to the taste of those plain yeomen who fought against Tarquin; but we always find that a nation which has attained to a high state of pseudo-refinement, without any moral improvement, is more addicted to savagery than a semi-civilised race. Downright barbarians are not more merciless than those who affect the intellectual superiority of the Roman or Chinese, while degenerating hourly.

We may notice that among the nations of antiquity the punishment of death was more common than with us, from sheer lack of means for inflicting lesser penalties. The spirit of Draco has been widely spread among legislators. The Romans had the resource of ordering off gangs of their criminals to the dark and unhealthy labour of the mines, or of allotting them to execute the draining-works of pestiferous marshes; but they could not keep them in prison. The Orientals, too, with their scourgings, mutilations, and habit of selling offenders into slavery, were wont to make a sharp jail-delivery with the scimitar's edge. Prisoners in the East have always been ill used; they have been huddled into dismal dens, and left to subsist on the food supplied them by friends, or by the casual compassion of strangers. Our costly convict establishments, our reformatories, penitentiaries, and the rest, with their wholesome diet, good clothing, and arrangements for securing the moral and physical health of the culprit, would have seemed impossible to a consul of old Rome.

While the Quirites were throwing murderers to the lions, making pilferers bear the forks and grind in the mill, and strangling noble matrons, the Germanic nations had established a very curious code of their own. Their punishments were fines. There was a money value for everything; so much 'geld' or 'boot' for murder, so much for fire-raising, for a cow killed, for a hurt given in chance medley, for a simple or aggravated insult offered to man or woman. Icelander, Goth, Teuton, Dane, and Saxon had their regular tariffs; every conceivable injury to person or property was appraised in the remarkable list of current prices which the wisdom of the great council had ratified. At first sight, it would appear that a practical impunity was afforded to the wealthy evil-doer, and that a rich man might coolly weigh his purse against any crime which he cared to commit; but a practical check was imposed: the injured person was not bound to accept the compensation, and in that case the direct vengeance of the *lex talionis* was permissible. Still, this habit of commuting revenge for coin, and of assessing wrongs at a money value, had the effect of making the manners of our ancestors less fierce than they would otherwise have been, and also of inducing habits of calm and temperate reflection. In all these things, there was a spirit which we should now deem grossly unjust. We esteem the life of the humblest vagrant equally sacred with that of the proudest peer. The old Anglo-Saxon law made the death of a person of rank a very costly matter, while the slaying of a churl was much more cheaply atoned. But the theft-boot, or graduated scale for the restoration of stolen property, with heavy interest, was that in most frequent requisition. That a monk-ridden and superstitious race, such as the Anglo-Saxons undoubtedly were, should have tested guilt by the ordeals of fire, water, and the sacramental wafer, is not surprising. But there was one strange circumstance connected with the system. The accused person was not obliged to appear alone at the bar. A powerful or popular defendant might bring up a host of compurgators, who shared the test and were at once bail and hostages. The ordeal

itself was in the hands of the monks, and it was shrewdly guessed that those who were liberal to Mother Church were less likely to stumble as they walked blindfold among the red-hot ploughshares. The Normans introduced no peculiar novelties in the way of punishment. Throughout all Europe, the gallows was for low-born criminals; noble offenders had the dreary privilege of block and axe.

English common law made a broad distinction between grand and petty larceny: he who stole eleven pennyworth of goods, was in no danger save of the beadle's whip, the jail, the branding-iron, the pillory, and stocks; but the purloiner of a shilling was to die on a gibbet, unless the judges of our sovereign lord the king shewed mercy. To do the latter justice, they very often did shew mercy; but they had no model prisons, no colonies whither to transport culprits, no possible means of reforming a jail-bird. The jails were dreadful dens, where hunger, riot, and oppression prevailed, and where fever in its worst shape was chronic. Nor were counties and boroughs very willing to be taxed for the maintenance of evil-doers. The judges were of necessity compelled to use sharp substitutes for penal servitude. The nailing and cropping of ears, whipping, and exposure in the pillory, with its attendant pelting—no joking matter in those days—were familiar resources. Heretics were simply burned at the stake; witches shared the same barbarous doom. It would appear that, before the Reformation, witches were to a large extent protected by the Romish ecclesiastics from the popular fury. Pope Innocent did certainly pen the terrible tract, *Malleus Maleficarum;* but it was reserved for the earlier Protestants to bring to the stake every poor old crone who had been heard to mumble against an obnoxious neighbour. England was honourably distinguished by an innate abhorrence of torture to extract a confession—the 'question extraordinary'—which was universal on the continent. To be sure, there *was* a rack in the Tower, and it was used by a few unscrupulous kings upon a few state prisoners; but our judges and parliaments always set their faces steadily against the whole system. Torture, repeatedly denounced as illegal, and never practised but by a direct royal command, and in a royal fortress, was last inflicted in England in 1642. When we read of the punishments which the middle ages witnessed, we are struck by their capricious nature. In one case, how much severity! in another, what strange laxity! Thus, Caillet, the leader of the French Jacquerie, was simply beheaded by the king of Navarre; while the Maid of Orleans was burned as a witch, and the cross-bowman who slew Richard I. of England was flayed alive. The wretch whose knife robbed France of her great Henri was tormented to death like a red Indian at the stake; while it is but a century since Damiens, for his attempt on the life of the Bourbon Sardanapalus, Louis XV., was torn by wild horses in the presence of all Paris.

England was never willing to admit innovations of this cruel kind. It is true that our ancestors were inconsistent; they would not nationalise the rack, but they would chop off the hand that wrote a libel on the sovereign. Yet the spirit of the country revolted from the excessive severities which courtiers devised; and although Oates and Dangerfield were scourged well-nigh to death in 1685, a few more years beheld the two Houses pass a bill for the prevention of 'Cruel and Unusual Punishments.' It is remarkable that, from very early days down to a century and a half ago, women were treated more harshly by law-makers than men. Thus, while multitudes of witches perished by fire in North and South Britain, very few wizards were executed at all. Even when the guilt of sorcery was supposed to be shared among many, Themis was not impartial. Shakspeare makes a nobleman in high authority pronounce the following sentence on Margery Jourdain and her male colleagues:

> The witch at Smithfield shall be burned to ashes,
> And you three shall be strangled on the gallows.

Scottish poetry breathes the same spirit: 'She's to be brent, and he's to be slain,' says the fine old gaberlunzie ballad; and the metrical legends collected by Bishop Percy afford proof that the dreadful death of fire was deemed peculiarly appropriate for females. Not only were witches thus treated, but women convicted of clipping the coin of the realm, down to the very end of the seventeenth century, endured this cruel doom. 'Three men hanged, and a woman burned, at Tyburn, for clipping of half-crowns,' was a not uncommon entry in the news-letters, and attracted small notice and scanty sympathy. It is true that, throughout Europe, the executioner was often permitted to strangle culprits, immediately before kindling the pile, and in other cases gunpowder and brushwood were occasionally disposed so as to give a speedy end to the sufferer's pains; but this was by no means general. James II. caused Elizabeth Gaunt, an aged woman of the most pious and benevolent character, to be burned alive at Tyburn, in 1685, for sheltering a Sedgemoor fugitive; and Lady Alice Lisle was condemned by Jeffreys to the same hideous fate, at Winchester, on the very day on which sentence had been pronounced, for a similar act of tender pity. The latter victim was not burned; the outcry of the stanchest friends of the hard-hearted king was too loud and universal to be wholly withstood, and a grudging order from Whitehall changed the punishment to beheading.

Drowning was not, at one time, a very uncommon sentence in continental Europe. It was never lawful in England. Scolds were solemnly ducked, suspected witches might be hurled into rivers or ponds by a mob, but no judge was competent to pass such a sentence. In Scotland, there are instances of women having been drowned for adultery; and in the annals of the religious persecution of the last Stuart reigns we have one alleged example of this punishment having been imposed—namely, upon one Isabel Wilson, and some other young female recusants—on the sands of Wigton, but with a want of authentic information on the subject which warns us to say little about it. The use of torture was in great vogue in Scotland during those reigns, in order to extort confession, and it did not cease to exist till some time after the Revolution. The barbarous punishment of 'breaking on the wheel' has never been permitted to take root in any portion of the British Isles. The Dutch General Ginckell, afterwards Earl of Athlone, was desirous of subjecting an obnoxious rapparee, taken in his Irish campaign, to this treatment. But the English officers of his army were resolute that not even a proclamation of martial law, and the need of quieting the country, should excuse such a barbarous act; and Ginckell gave up his wish.

Abroad, this punishment was very common, when the law had clutched some incorrigible or formidable malefactor. In Germany, it was in constant operation; and the Grève of Paris afforded many sanguinary spectacles of this kind. The wheel was the ultimate doom to which the highwayman, the coiner, and the church-robber, looked forward. It produced a powerful impression on the populace, but one rather of curiosity and animal excitement than of pity or terror. The patient was firmly tied to an enormous wheel, which was slowly turned round, while the hangman, with an iron bar of great weight, broke the culprit's bones one by one. A humane or well-feed official might give the *coup de grâce* almost at once; but in most cases hours were consumed by this sickening spectacle, as one wearied man after another resigned the crowbar, and still the wheel revolved,

and the blows fell, dull and heavy, on the crushed and battered body, breathing still.

The Count de Horn, a man of princely rank, suffered this horrid sentence for murder and robbery, during the Orleans Regency; and an equally remarkable sufferer was Perez, prime minister of Spain. It has always been esteemed noteworthy by pathologists, that the latter, after receiving one blow of the heavy bar with groans and tears, laughed aloud when the second stroke fell on his injured arm. 'Why do you laugh, my son?' asked the confessor, who held the crucifix before the eyes of his penitent. Perez simply replied that he laughed at his own foolish fears, and at his having dreaded the second stroke, when he ought to have known that the nervous system would be shattered by the first blow, and pain thenceforth cease. It may be that this theory accounts for the stoicism with which many French criminals underwent the doom of the wheel. It was currently reported that the highwaymen possessed some secret whereby they deadened their nerves, and proved nearly insensible to the violence endured. But it is not unlikely that this revolting method of execution was less terrible to the sufferer than to the spectators, and that life lasted after sensation was extinct.

It has been conjectured that burning at the stake was less dreadful than is commonly supposed. Physiological theorists will have us believe that surfaces have a monopoly of feeling, that pain is only skin deep, and that our nerves are so curiously constituted that the utmost anguish of body may pass by an easy transition to apathy, or even to pleasure. Burning has certainly been endured with great courage, and even cheerfulness, not only by religious martyrs, whose faith sustained them, but by the victims of tyranny, and by the sinful as well as the innocent. Excitement, a violent tension of the nerves, will often, as we know, render us not only callous to minor kinds of pain, but almost unconscious of injuries received. The soldier who is mortally hurt in battle is often the last to recognise the incurable nature of his wound: the languor of fatigue, famine, loss of blood, all have been forgotten in a moment, when the roar of fight began, a thousand times in the world's history. And so it may be that Providence is more merciful to us than we are to each other; and that a sufferer has often, by the very fact of his inability to feel acute pain for any length of time, escaped the worst malice of a tyrant.

It is a trite remark, that almost all who perish on the scaffold, die well. From the Highland cattle-lifter who 'played a spring and danced it round,' beneath the fatal tree, to the young queen stooping her white neck, like a drooping lily, to the headsman's axe, nearly every person whose execution is on record has met death without flinching. Kings, whose life had been one of self-indulgence and timid caution, hoary philosophers, delicate maidens, ferocious criminals, have died without shewing any sign of fear. As for the stoical aborigines of North America, not only have they been known to sleep during the intervals of the torture, but they have often refused to avail themselves of the means of escape.

Louis Seize, a soft-hearted, though a most ill-starred monarch, had practically abolished the wheel, even before the revolutionary deluge did away with it for ever. The Revolution also put an end to the cruel and fantastic punishments which the barbarous local parliaments of France were accustomed to mete out according to their caprice. The famous instrument which supplanted the axe of the noble and the gallows of the plebeian, may have been a real invention on the part of its supposed author, the Doctor Guillotin. But in Rome and Naples there existed a ruder copy of the same form; the Maiden of Halifax, which the Regent Albany introduced into Scotland, and by which he himself and his turbulent sons suffered in turn, was a guillotine to all intents and purposes. Spain has the credit of having devised that garrotte, or strangling windlass, which is peculiar to the Peninsula.

The national punishment of England is undoubtedly hanging. If we did not seek, as others did, to impress the public by the horror of our legal vengeance on criminals, at least life was held at a low rate. Not only did the king's judges, twice a year, sentence scores of offenders to the halter, but miserable little local tribunals, sitting in close boroughs, consigned swarms of petty criminals to the gibbet. It was death to steal a sheep or a shilling, death to pass a bad half-crown, death to fire a stack, death to purloin from a counter or a warehouse. Those shoplifters who now get off with six weeks' seclusion in Coldbath Fields, would then have been summarily disposed of. The jury would have brought in a verdict of guilty, the judge would have written *sus. per coll.* on his notes, and so blotted them out of the roll of the living. Every Black Monday saw its doleful cart-loads of the condemned on their way to Tyburn. Sixteen persons were hanged in one day in front of Newgate.

Strangely enough, though our ancestors justly boasted that England was hostile to torture, political prisoners were very hardly dealt with. The traitor was not allowed to die of simple strangulation. It is painful, even now, to read how the prisoners of '45 were publicly mangled in their last moments, at Kennington and Carlisle. Old men are yet living who saw the heads of Thistlewood and his fellow-plotters held up by the executioner, amid the jeers of a brutalised crowd, none the better in mind or soul for the warning example thus afforded them.

One kind of torture only was permissible. The prisoner who refused to plead, and who was pronounced 'mute by malice,' could not be hanged, by some strange scruple of English law, but he could be pressed to death on the prison floor. To be chained down, to be fed daily with either one morsel of barley-bread, or one draught of 'any water, except fresh water, taken from the pool nearest the jail door,' to have 'as much iron or stone as he can bear, and more,' laid on the labouring chest, till its panting ceased for ever, was strange usage in a Christian land. Yet there were several who, with inherent obstinacy, preferred to die thus, rather than pronounce a legal formula, and earn an easier ending. One reason for this obduracy was, that the goods of convicted felons were forfeit to the crown; while the wretch who was squeezed out of life under a ton of iron, could bequeath his property intact to his children.

Certainly, in society as well as in a school, among grown persons as well as children, the rewards bear no sort of fair proportion to the punishments.

A LITTLE SPECULATION.

Jean Bertrand and Joseph Anatole Ravel were cousins. Their relationship was so well known, and well established a fact, that nobody doubted it, either in the village of Vaucluse or the city of Carpentras. But the cousins were far from being equal in the eyes of the world. Bertrand was the son of a poor peasant; Ravel's father was a well-to-do shopkeeper, who had long been a town-councillor of Carpentras, and had some pretensions to the dignity of mayor. Still, although Joseph wore a spruce jacket in boyhood, soon to be exchanged for the smart uniform and tightly buckled belt of the Lycée, while Jean was to be seen at work among the vines, in blouse and wooden shoes, Jean and Joseph were cousins. The one got a tolerable education, and though by no means brilliant in his mental powers, returned from college with an amount of classical and mathematical learning which delighted his parents; the other picked up a little writing and ciphering at the

normal school of Vaucluse, and contrived, by painful study, to master the contents of an occasional newspaper. It was the old fable of the town mouse and the country mouse over again.

But if the contrast had been great between the kinsmen in their boyish days, it was much greater when they were both middle-aged men and fathers of families. Jean Bertrand had inherited little more than an unsullied name and a few acres of meadow and vineyard on the picturesque bank of the Sorgue, within a short walk of Petrarch's grotto and fountain; Ravel, on the other hand, had not only succeeded to all the savings of his parents, to a house and shop in Carpentras, and an estate at no great distance, but had been enriched by an unexpected legacy which enabled him to double his landed possessions. A French provincial with twelve hundred pounds sterling of annual revenue, is a much more wealthy person, relatively speaking, than an Englishman of the same nominal means, and Ravel had as much as this, or more. He shut up the shop where his father and grandfather had sold woollens for many years; he altered his house, bought new furniture, set up his carriage, and gave solemn dinners, twice a year, to the principal inhabitants. An Englishman in Ravel's position would perhaps have ruined himself by taking to the turf or some other expensive pursuit; but a Frenchman, when undazzled by the glories of Paris, has a thrifty instinct which keeps his expenditure within bounds; accordingly, Joseph Anatole Ravel was able to capitalise at least ten thousand francs a year, and grew richer by mere force of living and saving. He was thought a happy man. His wife, who had not, we may be sure, come to him empty-handed, was a notable housekeeper; his three daughters, though no beauties, were healthy and tractable; and his only son, Hector Ravel, was really a fine young man, tall, handsome, and high-spirited, with sparkling black eyes and a winning smile that charmed half the feminine world of Carpentras. Monsieur and Madame Ravel were wonderfully fond and proud of this jewel of a son, who was clever as well as pleasing in manner and looks; they predicted a grand destiny for him. The Ravel property was increasing; and though, by French law, girls and boys share alike, the two younger and uglier of the young ladies had already exhibited a desire for a conventual life, and with very little encouragement from their parents, were sure to end their days in the quiet nunnery at St Eustache. This would reduce the future heirs of the estate to two, and it would bear dividing. Hector might go up to the University of Paris, take his Bachelor's degree, practise as advocate in the Imperial Court of his native department, keep company with the highest in the land, and marry—but there was the rub.

Hector Ravel, who might have aspired to mate with some member of the ruined aristocracy of the province, who might have wedded one of the old marchioness's daughters now pining at the Château de Lissolles, whom the Countess of Cambressin always welcomed graciously to her *salon*, whom the Baron de Bassemain smiled upon, chose to give his heart and plight his troth to a poor, humble peasant-girl. No wonder that his parents were pained, angry, furious; that his sisters were vexed and spiteful; and that all the artillery of family wrath was brought to bear upon the young man. Catherine Bertrand, the only child of poor Jean, Ravel's despised kinsman, was a good girl and a pretty girl, much prettier than any one of the six gaunt Demoiselles de Lissolles, or than Mademoiselle de Cambressin, or than the heiress of Baron de Bassemain, who had passed a winter in Paris, and gave the law in dress and deportment to all the untravelled misses of the district. I think Hector made pretty Catherine's acquaintance one day when he was out shooting among the mountains, and coming down thirsty and tired, stopped at a cottage door to ask for a draught of the common country wine, cider, water, anything. They are hospitable folks, the peasants of the old papal province that had Avignon for its capital in elder times, and they made Hector welcome without knowing him in the least, for there was little or no intercourse between the families. But Catherine hastened to draw the wine from the best cask, and to set what modest refreshments the house afforded before the stranger, and Hector could not but admire the dark-eyed, peach-cheeked village beauty, in her simple rustic dress. Conversation followed, of course, and lo! the peasant maid proved to be the cousin of the elegant young townsman. Hector went home more than half in love; he came again and again, and presently he spoke his mind, and Hector Ravel was the accepted lover of little Catherine.

The young man's parents were very angry and bitterly vexed. They tried prayers, they tried threats; they argued, sneered, pleaded, menaced, all in vain. Their wrath and sorrow were not absolutely unnatural: all their hopes were bound up in their son. But the young man's strong love rendered him deaf to threat or cajolery. As for giving Catherine up, he spurned the notion; he would wait. His 'grand majority' would come in a few years, when he should be twenty-five, and then he could marry, even if his parents still continued to refuse their consent. Before that time, the code stood sternly in the way, and French law forbade the young couple to be happy. There were many stormy scenes, not a few stolen visits to the cottage of the Bertrand family, vows repeated a hundred times, and love that burned the brighter for the clouds of difficulty and trouble; and the end of it was, that Hector Ravel volunteered for the army, put on the blue and scarlet of the Imperial Zouaves, and was draughted off to Algeria. 'I shall come back before very long,' said the young man, as he kissed his weeping little *fiancée* for the last time; 'I shall write often. When my term of service is over, even if my father does not relent before, I shall be a free man; so dry your eyes, little wife: I shall think of you every day and hour, and you of me, darling, though I shall be in Africa, and you in our own France.'

'But if they kill you, *là bas*—ah! Hector, I have heard those Bedouins are very wicked!' answered the little maid, as she clung, trembling, to her lover's strong shoulder.

'You must pray for me, dear girl, and then I shall be sure to come back,' answered Hector simply. And we may be pretty sure that when Catherine went to the gray little church on the rocky platform above the village, Hector's name was always foremost in her innocent orisons.

She was loving, tender, and constant, a good little thing; but not in the least clever. She was able, though, to read and admire Hector's fine letters from Oran or Constantine, describing the wonders and stirring adventures of a soldier's life in North Africa, the productions, scenery, and people of the province, and those wild campaigns against Kabyle and Arab, which renew the early experiences of the Crusades. Poor Catherine wrote short and simple answers to these epistles; she was no great correspondent, and she had not inherited the odd, undeveloped talent of her father. Not that Jean Bertrand had the reputation of being a clever man; on the contrary, being rather taciturn and undemonstrative in manner, he was looked on by his neighbours as an honest, dull fellow, never likely to distinguish himself in any way. French peasants esteem bargaining as the highest flight of the human intellect, and the surest test of genius, and Jean was only tolerable at a bargain; not one of those adroit and voluble higglers who always have the best of a transaction. There was something quiet and modest, too, about the man: he never bragged, and was

averse to wordy arguments, so that he was by no means regarded as an oracle at Vaucluse. No judges are so severe as a man's own relatives; and so it turned out that in the whole district there was no one who despised the abilities of Jean Bertrand so heartily as his rich cousin, Joseph Ravel. This feeling of scorn increased tenfold when Hector committed the unpardonable folly of falling in love with his poor kinswoman, and M. Ravel never spoke of Catherine's father without dubbing him 'booby,' 'blockhead,' or the like. It was impossible for even anger and spite to find a flaw in honest Jean's armour of integrity, but he was now abused as an idiot and a dunce on all occasions; yet one or two persons, M. le Curé and M. le Docteur, in especial, whose superior education enabled them to take a juster view of their neighbours' characters than that of the rest, felt pretty certain that Jean was no fool. Had he not been the first of all the farmers in the parish, when the dreadful *oidium* was ruining the hopes of the vintage, to apply the new sulphur-dressing to his vines, while many mocked his credulity who were sorry afterwards that they had not followed his example. When the Sorgue rose in flood, too, and threatened to inundate the valley, Jean had been most useful in devising methods of strengthening and raising the embankments, although, when the peril was at an end, noisier talkers had unscrupulously appropriated the whole merit of his suggestions. The curate and the doctor, then, looked upon Bertrand as a sensible person enough; but the neighbourhood had a poor opinion of his brains. One thing was certain, whether Jean were above or below the average standard of intellect, he was by nature the calmest and most unambitious of men. He had never been known to envy his cousin the prosperity and promotion which made the latter so inflated with pride; he was always, to all appearance, cheerful and contented, and worked steadily from day to day, without anxiety or repining. But since Hector Ravel went away, and since Catherine's gay spirits began to grow dull and depressed, and her bright eyes to grow thoughtful, a change, too, came over Jean Bertrand. The peasant became meditative and gloomy; he would often watch Catherine as she moved about the cottage, noting that her cheek was paler, and that her smile was more rare and less joyous than it had once been. Then Jean would sigh, and push back his chair, and go out, and stride along the bank of the river, with his brows knit, and his shoulders stooped, thinking deeply, with a restless, unquiet eye.

'*Bien sûr*, thy father is planning something,' Madame Bertrand would say to her daughter, as they plied their classical-looking distaffs: 'he has the air of one who seeks—I know not what. But be sure of this, *petite*, it is for thy good he is thus puzzling his poor dear head.'

Madame Bertrand was one of the very few people who believed in Jean's hidden talents. This was in itself strong evidence. That man is no fool whose wife puts faith in his abilities. Some time elapsed, and whatever the peasant might have sought, apparently remained as far off as ever. He said not a word; he went about the work of the farm as regularly as ever, but he was perturbed and ill at ease. It was on a certain Sunday afternoon, while sitting in the open doorway of his cottage, slowly spelling through the contents of a provincial newspaper, that Jean suddenly started up, and, with a loud and triumphant exclamation, slapped down his broad hand upon the paper. And what was this exclamation? Had Jean Bertrand been a scholar, he would probably have cried 'Eureka!' as it was, he merely exclaimed: 'I have it!' which comes to nearly the same thing. Then, without answering a syllable to the questions of his wife, whose curiosity was piqued by this unusual ejaculation, he tucked the journal under his arm, and left the house with a step far more elastic than common. Jean trudged down to the village, and Madame Bertrand watched him as he went. For a moment, she imagined that he might be bound for the *cabaret*, where, at that hour, a knot of stanch topers and jovial companions might be found; but Jean was a paragon of sobriety, and this idea was dismissed as quickly as formed. 'He has gone to buy something,' said Dame Bertrand. Catherine said not a word. She had not heard her father's speech, nor noticed his departure; she sat gazing at her gilt-edged Book of Hours, open in honour of the day, but her thoughts were far away—far away among the yellow plains of Sahara, where the tents were pitched among the sand-wreaths, and where the evening watch-fires were beginning to flicker already, as the dusk and the dew fell, and the jackal's howl told of the coming night. Thus it fell out that Catherine did not share her mother's emotions of curiosity or surprise, which occupied the good woman until her husband came back, with the same brisk step, and with a bright but steady eye. In his hands he carried writing-paper, pen and ink, freshly purchased for the occasion, since the houses of poor south-country farmers are seldom overstocked with such matters. He had something else, too—a stamped and printed piece of paper, in which Dame Bertrand recognised what the French style a *bon*, and we a post-office order.

'Ah, ah, *notre maître*, are you going to write a letter?' asked the housewife, rolling her eyes at the stationery, a rare sight in the old papal patrimony. In truth, since their marriage, Dame Bertrand had only seen her consort pen, with much toil, two such epistles—one to a grazier near the foot of Mount Ventouse, who bought his heifers and calves; the other to the notary, who had invested the humble savings which were to constitute Catherine's modest dower. Jean answered his spouse's query with that bland, sheepish, mock-simplicity which a French peasant generally assumes when he wishes to baffle inquiry.

'Eh, it appears so, my wife. Open only the shutter of that window to the west, so that I may have light enough for the task.'

Dame Bertrand did as she was bid. She asked no more questions. The connubial relations are different in town and country throughout France. The Frenchwoman of the towns, she who keeps the keys, who buys and sells, and rules undisputed mistress over till and purse, has usually a will of her own. When she calls her husband *mon ami*, she does so in rather a condescending tone, as if she wished to convey the idea of complimentary encouragement. She is mistress in her own sphere, and it is only at the *café* that M. Bonhomme can do as he pleases. But the farmer's wife, when she calls her husband by the respectful title of *notre maître*, really means it. The strong man who can plough, and dig, and manage horses, is truly the master, and the inequality of the sexes is an article of faith. So Jean Bertrand was allowed to write his letter in peace, without question or comment. An awful business it was: it was painful to see how slowly the pen formed the irregular characters—how awkward was the manipulation of that great brown hand which wielded the hatchet and spade so dexterously, and how the worthy man glared at the page as he toiled on from blot to blot, from smear to smear, erasing, altering, or retouching his handiwork. All things must come to a close, and so did Jean Bertrand's letter. The good fellow gave a sigh of relief, wiped his forehead, and proceeded very deliberately to fold the document, enclosing in it the post-office order, to address it, and to secure it with a heedfully moistened wafer. Then he took his hat, and went forth and dropped it into the box at the post-office.

A day or two after this, a neighbour, hoeing his potatoes, was surprised to see Jean Bertrand at work

in quite a neglected corner of his little domain. This, though the prettiest, was certainly the most unprofitable bit of the whole farm, consisting as it did of about three acres of stony soil, where the patient she-goat tethered there had much ado to pick up a living; but this strip of land went close up to the mountain-side, and was traversed by a limpid stream that leaped in a natural cascade from the brow of a crag, and fell into a rocky basin below. What was the amazement of the neighbour when, lifting his head from his occupation to have a friendly gossip across the low fence, he saw that Jean was actually at work deepening this basin in one part, clearing it of weed in others, and constructing a kind of dam or breakwater, so as to divide it into two unequal parts.

'Good-morning, *compère*,' said the neighbour, leaning on his hoe, and coughing a little inquisitive cough.

'Good-morning; how goes it with your good wife and the children?' civilly returned Jean, digging away gallantly the while, and up to his knees in mud and water.

'Quite well, *mon brave*, said the neighbour—'well and fresh. But you, Jean, what fly has stung you, man? Do you hope to catch eels, that you wet your feet in that fashion?'

'Better than that,' answered Jean, with a happy chuckle. The other stared at him with a bewildered air. Two or three more questions did he essay, and then gave it up as a bad job, for Jean chose to be mysterious, laughing good-humouredly, but baffling all inquiry and conjecture. The next day, and the next, and the next, every moment that Jean could spare from the regular work of the farm, he devoted to his strange voluntary labours among the rocks. Thanks to his persevering toil, the rocky basin was soon divided into two portions by a dam artfully built of osiers and loose stones; the smaller half received the foaming waters of the cascade, the larger spread itself out in a broad and shallow pool, with a bottom of pebbles and fine yellow sand, and where the force of the current was gentle and subdued. Nor did the alterations end here. Jean chose the softest spot in the little stony meadow, and carefully dug a broad and deep hollow, into which the stream being conducted, soon formed a pond, and this was connected in turn with a third pool, after which the water, gushing over a rude weir, ran into the sparkling Sorgue. All these toils of Jean Bertrand's, executed in the hours of repose or relaxation, did not fail to attract considerable attention in the parish. At the cabaret, at the church porch, wherever gossips congregated, this novel topic was certain to be discussed in all its bearings. What was, what *could* be the meaning of these remarkable proceedings? Was Jean mad, or had some malign witch or wizard—they believe still in witches and wizards in the Comtat—thrown a spell over him? It was an unheard-of thing that any farmer should task his muscles, and waste his time so unprofitably. The whole affair was incomprehensible to the last degree. It may seem at first sight as if the curiosity of the neighbourhood might have been gratified by the simple process of asking a question; not so, however. Those who have dealt with the peasantry of France, best know how impenetrable is the reserve of those honest Gauls, a quaint impassibility, sprung partly from caution, and partly from long habit, which foils the most crafty cross-examiner. Nobody thought it worth while to ask Jean roundly why he devoted his leisure to such odd pursuits. A half-joking hint was thrown out, now and again, and baffled with ease. When the wits of the parish bantered Jean for the trouble he took, the worthy man joined in the laugh, merely rejoining: 'Neighbours, what will you? One does what one does.' Nor could the women of Vaucluse elicit the truth from Dame Bertrand or Catherine: they knew nothing whatever of Jean's intentions or projects: the secret remained intact, because it continued to be the sole property of its originator.

Presently, Jean's self-imposed labours were over; four pools existed where only one had been of old, and still the clear runlet of water murmured gently by, as it wound among the stones, and subsided at last in the little reedy creek that communicated with the river. About this time, Jean Bertrand became immensely interested in the Carpentras diligence, a shabby green vehicle, drawn by three rawboned jades, which was the only public conveyance known to the neighbourhood. Whenever this rattling vehicle arrived, Jean was sure to thrust his stalwart person, and his calm, well-shaved face, into the midst of the group of lounging idlers, who suspended their game with stone bowls to stare at the new arrivals. To be sure, the farmer did not seem to be much interested in the aspect of the few passengers, but he always patiently waited until the last package had been unloaded, and then heaved a little sigh, and turned on his heel. At last, his perseverance was rewarded.

'*Hein!* Monsieur Bertrand, I've got something for you,' cried the bloused apology for a conductor, as he scrambled down from the dusty roof of his omnibus. Jean stepped forward: his eyes brightened.

'*Tiens!* where have I put it, this parcel of bad-luck?' grumbled the rustic guard, as he tugged at the sheepskins and matting that choked the entrance to the 'boot' of the diligence.

'Here it is, see then,' squeaked the urchin driver, as he dropped the weather-beaten reins on the necks of his lean nags, and bestowed a sounding kick upon a box that occupied a place on the footboard.

'Hand it down, *enfant!*' cried Jean eagerly; 'so—carefully there. Nothing to pay, is there?'

'No; free to destination,' rejoined the guard. 'Nevertheless, Monsieur Bertrand, if your goodness could spare a man some *sous* to drink'——

'Ah, good-for-nothing!' said Jean with a kindly smile; 'who should have sous to give thee, and where should they be got from, glutton?' But for all that, the farmer put his hand in his pocket, and handed over to the grinning petitioner a few bronze portraits of Napoleon III. Then Jean tucked the box under his arm, and strode sturdily off. The idlers—there are always a few unoccupied persons, even in a village—gazed after him with wide open eyes, but all they could see was a wooden box of moderate dimensions, damp and dark of hue, as if something moist were packed inside it. That evening, the carpenter of the village, on dropping in at the cabaret, where a circle of choice spirits had assembled, wore an expression of mystery and importance which attracted all eyes towards him.

'Ha! you others, 'tis a singular world we live in,' said the carpenter, as he took his seat. People in the provinces are not much given to theory, so every one looked to the man of wood for a practical illustration of the doctrine he had just broached. 'A singular world!' continued the carpenter. 'You know, you others, I told you the other day how Jean Bertrand had ordered me to make a lot of boxes, queer shallow things such as I never put together in the course of my days, never?'

Yes, they all remembered. They were all dying to know the sequel, and after tantalising them to a slight extent, the carpenter went on:

'Jean, as you know, neighbours, is as close as wax—no babbler, *allons*—he did not say what he wanted the boxes for, and I puzzled my head to no purpose to guess what for. Once I thought of cucumbers, but then, where was the glass? No; it decidedly could not be for cucumbers. So I cudgelled my brains in vain, until this evening Jean comes to my workshop, with old Antoine, you know, his day-labourer?'

'Yes, yes,' cried the company; 'we all know old Antoine; but what of Jean? Be quick, neighbour.'

The carpenter was not disposed to part with his information without a little coaxing; he coughed, and said he was thirsty, and story-telling was dry work. The company grew hospitable to a bewildering extent; every man pressed his *canon* of wine, full or half full, on the carpenter. Had that artisan possessed eleven mouths, he might have quaffed eleven eleemosynary draughts at one and the same time. He chose a full stoup, drank, and after a little persuasion, went on:

'Jean and old Antoine his man, you must know, had come to fetch away the boxes I had made, and for which Jean paid on the nail, as every honest customer ought to do. Well, seeing the boxes were heavy, I offered to help to carry them up, and Jean hesitated a moment, and then said to himself: "After all, why not? it must be known now." And then he accepted my offer, and we carried the boxes up. I thought they would be put into the house or garden; but no! Jean must needs have them placed—neighbours, you'll never guess where—in the pool where the water tumbles off the rock, where he built that funny dam, you know, for what nobody but the saints above can tell.'

'Ah!' murmured the assembly.

The carpenter cast a proud look around. 'You others, confess you are in the dark completely. But I am *bon enfant*, and you shall know all. Jean put the boxes there, and put gravel into them, sand and stones mixed, and carefully arranged them so that the water should trickle into them and out again. Then he put in what he had taken out of the box that came for him to-day by the diligence—and that, neighbours, was—fish-spawn; *va!* the great word is spoken.'

'Fish-spawn!' repeated everybody in profound wonder. The carpenter nodded.

'And what for? *tron de l'air!* what for?' asked the oldest peasant in the room.

'What for?' repeated the company, with oaths and exclamations that shewed how genuine was their surprise. The carpenter was radiant with the pride of superior knowledge.

'See!' said he; 'you all know that Jean is fond of reading the newspaper, not, like the rest of us, to see what price corn and madder bring at Avignon market, or what tricks the Parisians are up to, but to find out what bran-new inventions are afloat. So, neighbours, it seems that he read a long rigmarole about something he calls pisci—pisciculture, that's the word—which means that they pretend you can grow fish as we grow vegetables, and have only to sow it in a pond—the eggs, that is—to make a fortune by selling fat fish of your own rearing.'

'Those are the stories of Mother Goose, those!' exclaimed, in an authoritative tone, the oldest man present.

'Yes, yes, the Père Camard is right: that has not common sense in it,' chorused the company. But when the carpenter went on to tell them that Jean had written to the director of the government establishment at Huninguen, near Bâle, requesting a supply of spawn, with full directions, and had sent a *bon* on the post-office in payment of expenses, the clamour became deafening.

'It's a disgrace to the parish!' vociferated one.

'He believes, then, in all these cock-and-bull stories, these *billevesées* invented by the towns-people in black coats?' exclaimed another.

'Poor Jean! he ought to be taken care of. I never thought him as bright as most, but now he has turned out an absolute idiot!' bawled a third. And when the assembly fully understood that it was for the reception and artificial cultivation of fish-spawn that Jean had taken the trouble to construct a series of pools, their contempt and anger knew no bounds. Agriculturists in France are not very tolerant of innovation, and least of all when they belong to the old Comtat of Avignon. That night, Jean and his family were awakened by a rough serenade of kettles and clattering frying-pans, and by the jeers and laughter of a noisy crowd. The peasant wisely kept his doors shut, and the rioters withdrew when their voices were hoarse with shouting. The next day saw Jean Bertrand, quiet and affable as ever, going about his vineyard and potato-field, the same painstaking tiller of the soil that the villagers of Vaucluse had always known him to be. But he had need of all his innate good-humour to withstand the storm of ridicule and expostulation which, by his attempt at pisciculture, he had brought about his ears. Derided by some, argued with by others, and hooted by the little boys of the village, Jean was compelled to pay the penalty of being in advance of his generation. When he was seen moving around his fishponds, with stooped shoulders and thoughtful eye, the village elders shook their wise heads, the middle-aged men tapped their sunburned foreheads with a significant gesture, and the children shouted a doggrel rhyme which some juvenile poet had elaborated in scorn of Jean Bertrand's new whim.

Still, honest Jean stuck to his hobby, and neither by word nor deed recanted his heresies. When a storm of rain caused an overgreat influx of water, and his miniature dams were injured by the sudden swelling of the mountain stream, Jean patiently applied himself to repair the damage. When witlings bantered, or when rustic sages preached, the experimentalist never suffered himself to be tempted into repartee or debate, but merely rejoined, with one of those indescribable Gallic shrugs that say more than words: '*Dame! qui vivra, verra.* We must all do as we may.'

But the more his new fancy was assailed, the more he clung to it; and his favourite stroll in spare time was to the pools where the spawn lay in the shallow boxes among the gravel, or where, at a later date, the young fry sported about, active and greedy in their first hunger and their first growth. Jean had no particular sympathy at home to encourage him in bearing the censure of his neighbours. His wife, though habitually obedient, was heartily sorry that her husband had made himself the laughing-stock of Vaucluse, and wished most devoutly that the newspaper had never beguiled Jean into what she secretly agreed with the public voice in stigmatising as an act of egregious folly. As for Catherine—young folks in love are sad egotists—I am afraid Catherine thought but little of her father and his ponds and fish-eggs, and the obloquy which he had brought upon himself, so busy were her thoughts with the absent Hector, now a corporal of Spahis.

And yet Catherine was the true cause of the step which Jean had taken.

'It is for you, my daughter,' the good farmer would mutter to himself, as he turned his honest eyes wistfully on the pale pretty face of the suffering girl. But whatever were his hopes or projects, he kept them to himself, and never attempted to dazzle even his nearest and dearest by predictions and rose-tinted dreams of the future. If he were an Alnaschar, in blouse and wooden shoes, it is certain at least that he was the meekest and least presumptuous of the species. When Jean went to market, he found that his reputation had preceded him. Luckily, or unluckily, he was the only man in the department who had essayed the new art of fish-culture, and he was welcomed in the city of Carpentras as if he had been one of those eminent Laputan philosophers who proposed to extract sunshine out of cucumbers. Foremost among the laughers was Jean's wealthy cousin, M. Joseph Anatole Ravel. This substantial burgher was fond of attending the markets, partly to indulge his love of a bargain by personally superintending the sale of the produce of his estate, and partly because a rich man's opinion is commonly listened to with a certain

amount of deference highly pleasing to some natures. Ravel was on speaking-terms with his kinsman, though neither had crossed, since childhood, the threshold of the other's dwelling. He had a grudge against Jean, as the father of the village beauty who had captivated his idolised son, and to whose fatal charms were due the young man's obstinacy and self-imposed exile. It so happened that the characters of Bertrand and his daughter stood so high and well established that no calumny could well be launched against either; but many a man who cannot be branded as an intriguer or a rogue can be derided, and Ravel was glad to see his cousin a laughing-stock. He had always despised Jean's calibre of intellect, and now he never spoke of him but in terms of the most insulting compassion. 'The poor dunce,' 'the bonhomme with the brains of a calf,' such were the flowers of speech which were thickly strewn on Jean Bertrand; while at other times Ravel would bring forth all the stores of his erudition to prove that what the peasant was trying was a sheer impossibility. Nothing but Jean's philosophical sweetness of temper prevented a quarrel, more than once, when the cousins met. Once, when M. Ravel was peculiarly eloquent on Jean's waste of time and trouble, the poorer of the two kinsmen exclaimed with a sigh: '*C'est égal!* My cousin, I wish I were master of the streams on that estate of yours; ponds, cascades, brooks—ah! you might make a use of them if you liked.'

'In nourishing tittlebats!' said fat M. Joseph Anatole Ravel, puffing out his crimson cheeks, and eyeing his relative with sublime scorn—'tittlebats and tadpoles, eh?—is it not so, *mon brave?* Thank you. Not such an ass.'

Jean said not a word more. Six months or so from the date of this interview, and about two years from the time of the arrival of that famous Pandora's box from the government establishment, Jean Bertrand, radiant with good-humour and health, led his laden mule into the crowded market-place of Carpentras. The farmer was dressed with unusual elegance, as if for some festive occasion. He wore his Sunday coat of brown cloth, a span-new sash of red silk, a figured waistcoat, and leather shoes: he had a flower in his button-hole, and his bright eye and cheery smile matched well with his holiday clothes. In the centre of the Place stood M. Ravel, with a knot of flatterers around him, passing various kinds of agricultural produce in review. His eye lit on his relation as he came up.

'Ho! here comes the wiseacre of Vaucluse,' exclaimed Ravel, who was in a remarkably jocose humour. 'Good-day, Jean, thou Solomon of the country-side! What on earth have you slung on your beast's back, in those covered tubs and baskets, Master Solon? Not tadpoles, *par hasard*, old frog-feeder?'

All the flatterers burst into an unanimous roar of laughter. Jean laughed, too, in his dry way.

'You shall have the first sight of my tadpoles, my cousin,' said he; and he opened tub and basket, and exhibited a tempting show of delicate fish, some alive, but all fresh and glittering, with dainty crimson spots on their dappled sides, and fins that had beaten the water but two hours before.

'Eh! eh! What have we here? *Diable!* they are trout and salmon,' exclaimed Joseph Ravel.

'They are so, my cousin. Trout and salmon of my growing,' said Jean, with a little tinge of triumph in his tone. 'I have not taken out an eighth part of what the pond contains, but I have fifty kilogrammes weight of fish, well told; and it's hard if I don't clear my three francs a kilogramme, which will make up a hundred and fifty francs. Not bad for a poor fellow like me, cousin Ravel.'

Ravel was puzzled. He rubbed his plump hands together thoughtfully, and his brows were knit; all at once he looked up, and his eyes twinkled. 'Those minnows of yours have cost you more than they are worth in the rearing. Now, confess,' said he.

'Not at all,' said Jean. 'I made the embankments myself in spare time, and I only had the carpenter to pay for the boxes and the two floodgates—a bagatelle. As for the nourishment of the poor dear little things, you conceive, it is not like a calf or a sheep: they find their own food; only when they were very small, I gave them a little dried liver, powdered fine, which cost me some forty sous, not more. *Au plaisir*, my cousin.'

And off went Jean; but Ravel and his flatterers laughed no more. Wherever the peasant went, his finny wares found a ready sale: fish always goes off well in a Roman Catholic country. The porter of a convent bought one great heap, another basketful was secured for the bishop's palace, the citizens' wives disputed with each other for the priority of purchase, and had Jean brought twice as much, he would have sold it all. By the time the mule was lightened of his load, the farmer's pocket was heavy with silver, copper, and gold. His modest estimate had been exceeded; the last sales had had the character of an auction, and the total receipts amounted to a hundred and eighty-nine francs six sous. Ravel followed his despised kinsman about with a face of stupified amazement, looking first at the dainty fish, that were weighed in scales, and transferred to cooks' aprons or housewives' baskets, and then at the coin that showered into Jean's hard, horny, toil-worn palm. But when Bertrand was about to leave the town, having sold all his fish, Ravel sidled half timidly up to him. 'Jean,' said he, 'upon my word, you are a shrewder person than I thought, and—and—if you would like to come home with me and take some refreshment—eh? because, you know, we're cousins, after all.'

'You have been somewhat late in remembering it, my cousin,' said Jean, with something of reproach in his look and voice; and he went his way, leaving his rich relation blushing and stammering in the public street. Nevertheless, two days afterwards, the combined effects of curiosity and self-interest drew Monsieur Joseph Anatole Ravel to visit the humble abode of Jean Bertrand. The latter received his guest with Provençal hospitality, and willingly shewed him the fishponds which had gained for their constructer such a disagreeable renown. The pools, as Ravel's own eyes assured him, were well stocked with trout and salmon-parr—only parr, though Jean had somewhat grandiloquently called them 'salmon.' But the true salmon, as distinguished from their cousins-german, the parr, had fought and leaped so lustily to gain the stream which, as their unerring instinct taught them, would lead them to the river which would bear them to the sea, that Jean had lowered his dam to liberate the prisoners.

'You see, my cousin,' said the peasant, 'it was heartbreaking to watch the poor things springing and struggling for freedom, after the manner of their kind. I set them free. In due time, when well grown and fat, they will return to the place where they were bred, if they are not killed before they reach me. And if they never do come back, why, it can't be helped. They would have died here. It was the *Bon Dieu*, look you, cousin, who planted that instinct in my little fish.'

And Jean reverently lifted his cap as he pronounced the words, and Ravel did not sneer at him; on the contrary, he said in a sheepish manner: 'Cousin Bertrand, I have not been overkind to you and yours. Well, well, I am not a man for apologies; but if bygones can be bygones?'

'Certainly,' said Jean; 'certainly. I bear no malice. Only my daughter Catherine, with her pale cheek that was so rosy, and those bright looks she used to have all changed—that vexes me sometimes: that is all.'

'Hum!' said Ravel; 'the *petite* is a good girl, and pretty to boot; I never denied that; and they are cousins, too, your child and my young hot-head out in Africa. But I have thirty thousand francs a year, and what father in his senses—— There! don't speak. I'm no chatterbox, but I hate to be interrupted. Now, Jean Bertrand, I will own that we who mocked you were wrong, and you were the wise man, after all, with your fish-eggs—there! Now, it has come into my head that I have, as you say, pools and streams in plenty on my property, and if you, with your little bits of ponds, could make so much profit by pisciculture, what could I make? hein?'

'If you had a man who understood the thing to direct affairs and put matters *en train?*' said Jean, timidly, but with a twinkling eye.

'I think that so necessary,' said Ravel, striking the palm of his fat hand gently on Jean's shoulder—'so necessary, that I am willing to sign articles of partnership. If you will undertake to manage all about the construction of the weirs and breeding-ponds, and that, I will pay all expenses, and give you an equal share of the profits. How do you like that? Why, with your skill and my property, I ought to become the richest man in the arrondissement.'

A partnership was accordingly concluded, in the autumn of last year, between the cousins. A partnership of a more tender nature was also entered into by Hector Ravel and Catherine Bertrand, the young man having been recalled from the army by the promise of his parents' consent to his union with the faithful village beauty.

The affairs of the firm of Ravel and Bertrand promise to thrive to a most flourishing extent, while nineteen farmers of the department have written to Huninguen for spawn, with the intention of re-stocking the streams of the Comtat. As for poor patient Jean, he is now more honoured and respected in Vaucluse than the curé himself.

WILD DEER IN DEVON.

'FORTY-FIVE years ago, one dark, cold, drizzly night, or rather morning—it was two o'clock, rendered doubly dreary by a howling wind, with occasional claps of thunder, and vivid flashes of lightning, I was riding home from my professional visits down a deep lonely bottom, flanked on each side by woods, which even by daylight appear almost interminable—the Haddon bottom. I was trotting slowly along; I will not say, 'Nescio quid meditans nugarum et totus in illis,' for I was thinking how comfortable the light of my own fireside would be after such a ride on such a night. Suddenly, above the growl of thunder, came a sound proceeding, as it seemed, from the bowels of the earth, so loud, so deep, so passing strange, that I never had heard its like before. I am not what is called a nervous man, I believe, but this sudden, and to me at that moment unaccountable, noise, had such an effect upon me, that,

> I care not though the truth I shew,
> I trembled with affright;

and it was not until I had galloped half a mile from the spot, that I felt my pulse beat as usual.'

Thus confesses gallant Charles Palk Collyns of Dulverton, Surgeon, who has since made himself pretty well acquainted with that awful sound, the *belling* of the stag, as, sick for love, the noble creature roams in search of the hinds at night o'er the weird North Devon moors. For nearly half a century, says he, in his recently published volume, the chase of the wild deer has been to him the greatest source of relaxation and enjoyment, and on such a subject we can scarcely have a better qualification for authorship. For intimate knowledge of local incident, indeed, no man is to be preferred to the country surgeon, who, wet or fine, by night and by day, must needs traverse far and near the region in which he dwells; and Mr Collyns is much more than a country surgeon. He is more even than an enthusiastic sportsman of the ordinary type, for what enthusiasm can be evoked by the pursuit of the hare, or the fox, comparable to that which animates the stag-hunter, from the first crash that proclaims the lord of the forest has left his lair, to the moment when, in the mountain torrent, or in the sea itself, the animal stands at bay, defying men and dogs!

The man who has only been 'out with the queen's,' and seen the deer turned out of a 'bus, sometimes requiring the touch of a hunting lash to make it start at all, can never have felt such a flame in his blood as he who has watched the agile creature bound over the fence of his covert, and then, at a long easy gallop, take slantwise the breezy hill. Such a glorious sight is to be now seen in only one district of Merry England, among the lofty wilds of Exmoor, and the open lands about the Quantocks flanking the Bristol Channel; and the time is, we fear, rapidly approaching when the wild red deer will be extinct even there. That beautiful portion of North Devon, with its heathery steeps, its ferny wildernesses, and its pools sequestered by the rushing streams, was always a favourite haunt of those noble creatures. So early as 1598, Hugh Pollard, Ranger of her most gracious Majesty Queen Elizabeth—'herself most excellently disposed to hunting'—had staghounds there; and the sport has been kept up intermittently until this day. A hart hunted by royal personages, and which managed to escape them, was called a Hart Royall; if he pleased their Highnesses, by affording a good run, it was enacted that 'no manner of person or persons should kill, hurt, hunt, or chase him again,' and he was called a Hart Royall Proclaimed. Up to comparatively late times, old customs and hospitalities connected with the chase have flourished in this locality which have died out elsewhere. The two country seats of the Acland family were open throughout the hunting season to all who presented themselves, unbidden but welcome guests; and when neither house nor stable could hold either guest or steed, still the late comer found hospitable welcome at the board, and sought his couch in the homely village inn. A huge china bowl, the clay of which is said to have been expressly taken from England in order to be fashioned with horse, and hound, and horn by the cunning workmen of the Celestial Empire, was regularly filled and emptied to the honour of stag-hunting at Hornicote or Pixton; while at Castle Hill, the mansion of Lord Fortescue, the huntsman would come in after dinner in full costume, on days when a stag had been killed, and sound a *mort*, and drink a bumper with the assembled company. Even now, among farmers and others, the head of the deer, after a good run, is produced in the evening with a silver cup in its mouth, out of which the favourite toast is drunk in the following manner: 'The cup is placed in the stag's mouth, secured with a cord, to prevent its falling out. When it is filled to the brim, the person who is to drink it holds a horn in each hand, and brings it to his mouth, when he must finish it at one draught; and then turn the head downwards, bringing the top of it in contact with his breast, to convince his companions that he has drunk it to the dregs, otherwise he is subject to a fine. In days still more gone by, a fine was imposed on him who left the field before the deer was killed.' The man who sees a stag slain for the first time, no matter what his rank, is always 'blooded'—has a little of the blood laid on his face, or ear, to mark him stag-hunter.

The old pack of Exmoor staghounds were connected, and that not distantly, with the bloodhound. 'In

height they were about twenty-six to twenty-eight inches, colour generally hare pied, yellow, yellow and white or badger pied, with long ears, deep muzzles, large throats, and deep chests. In tongue, they were perfect; and when hunting in the water, or on half-scent, or baying a deer, they might be heard at an immense distance. Even when running at speed, they always gave plenty of tongue, and their great size enabled them to cross the long heather and rough sedgy pasturage of the forest without effort or difficulty. . . . . Like the game they pursued, they never appeared to be putting forth all their powers of speed, and yet few horses could live with them on the open. Their rarest quality, perhaps, was their sagacity in hunting in the water. Every pebble, every over-hanging bush or twig which the deer might have touched, was quested as they passed up or down the stream; and the *crash* with which the scent, if detected, was acknowledged and announced, made the whole country echo again.' Unhappily, these hounds were consigned to the kennel of a German baron, and the thought of them still hunting their old game, the deer, in alien lands, moves our good doctor almost to tears. The present pack is, however, a very fair one, and the manner in which its proceedings are conducted is old-world and interesting.

The first thing necessary to the hunting of the wild red deer is to discover where a 'warrantable' one is to be found in the neighbourhood of the Meets. This forms the delicate duty of the Harbourer.

'Let us fix as a date the 30th August, time 4.30 A.M. Scene, outside the lonely cottage of James Blackmore, planted on the outskirts of the deep Haddon woods. The doors open, and forth in the drizzly rain stalks the best and most enthusiastic of his class and calling. We will pass over the four or five dreary miles which lie between the cot and the scene of the morning's labours, and again take up our friend as he peers cautiously through the hedge of the large turnip-field which lies between the road and wood. He turns away after strict scrutiny. There are none of the brown-coated herd to be seen in that favourite feeding-place. Onward he goes down the lane, and carefully examines the field of oats which he knows to be the favourite pasture of the deer. Again he is doomed to disappointment; and after marking the quarter from which the wind blows, and finding that the wind is full in his face, and therefore blows from the covert, he steals into the oat-field, and down he goes by the side of the hedge towards the wood, his eyes bent steadfastly on the ground. He knows, though he has never read *The Art of Venerie*, that the hart hath a propertie that if he goe to feede in a yong spring or coppes, he goeth first to seeke the winde, that he may finde if there be any person in the coppes which may interrupt him, and that it is essential that he should go up wind when engaged in discovering the whereabouts of a deer. There has been no rain lately, and but little chance for any but the most experienced eyes to track an animal less heavy than an elephant over those clods of earth. Suddenly the harbourer stops. There is a leaf bent, a blade of grass turned, or some sign which the adept in woodcraft can interpret, but which, to the senses of the uninitiated, would be a closed book. He looks carefully at the outstalks near. From two or three, the ear is gone, bitten off, and recently too, but not by the animal of which he is in search. Those ears were bitten off by a hind, and not by a stag; for Jem knows well by long experience that a stag daintily bites off but half the ear, or even less, while the hind takes the whole. He continues his walk, but nothing further does he find in the oat-field to attract his attention. He retraces his steps, and next the turnip-field becomes the scene of his labours. He stops, and finds the turnips recently bitten; but he remarks that the roots have remained in the ground, and have been bitten several times. Again he draws on his experience, and concludes that a hind and not a stag has fed there, for he knows that a stag never takes more than one bite at a turnip, and that in so doing he pulls up the root, and throws it over his head; while the hind will take two or three bites at the same root, if it remain firm in the ground, before she leaves it, and passes on to another. Onward goes Jem, and lo! a row of turnips recently rooted up, and that beyond all doubt by a male deer. But was it a "warrantable" stag that did the mischief. Again he consults the ground carefully, anxiously trying to get the print of the hoof well defined: one glance at the "slot" would satisfy him in a moment, but the ground is so dry that it is impossible to come to a conclusion on the point. . . . . Suddenly he stops, and down on his bended knee he goes, as if he were seized with an uncontrollable impulse to worship the rising sun. He has found what he wanted in a soft piece of ground—the rounded track, the blunted toe-point, the wide-spread mark—the fresh "slot," in short, of a stag.'

The measurements are taken, by which he knows whether the creature be warrantable (that is, fit to be hunted), and finding no sign of its having broken covert, homeward he wends his way with the printed sod in his hand. At the meet Jem communicates the all-important news with becoming secrecy to the master of the hounds, and mounted on an old pony, leads the way to where the precious footprint (scarce less interesting than that which put Robinson Crusoe in such a state of excitement) was found. Arrived within half a mile or so of the covert, the pack is taken to a farm, and shut up. Two couples of tried, steady old hounds are drafted out as *tufters*, and with them the huntsman draws for the deer. If the covert were drawn with the pack, the hounds would probably divide on a dozen deer, leaving the stag of which the field are in search still in his lair. The tufters are stopped as soon as they have driven the stag well away, 'the pack is brought up and laid on, and as they toss their heads and fling their sterns when they catch the scent, and dash away across the moor, the man to whom we are mainly indebted for this auspicious commencement of a day's sport, is seen standing in the centre of a crowd of admiring rustics, the big tears of excitement and joy coursing one another down his furrowed cheeks, as he swears in good Somerset, that "if it arn't as vine a stag as ever he zeed, he arn't no zinner." The regular fee of this useful gentleman is a sovereign, and the prospect of gold sometimes induces 'irregulars' to assume the high office of Harbourer. Not only have the marks of bullocks' and pigs' feet been mistaken for a stag's 'slot,' but upon one occasion the hounds were taken miles out of their way, and with all the usual solemnities roused from his unaccustomed lair—a donkey!

The cunning of the hunted deer is excessive. It is a common incident for an old deer, when roused, to beat the covert until he can light upon one of his younger companions. When found, the veteran, by a stamp of the foot, or application of the horn, rouses his young friend from his bed, in which he places himself, and putting his head close to the ground, allows the hounds to pass him in pursuit of the dislodged substitute. Mr Collyns has known an old stag turn out three different deer during one chase, and lie down in their places; and at length being foiled in that stratagem, to sink himself in a deep pool, whereby the hounds went by him altogether. The invigorating effect of a plunge in the water upon a fatigued deer is almost incredible, and the tricks he will play in it are truly strange. A stag will wade for miles in a stream, taking extreme care to choose the middle of it, that he may touch neither branch nor bank, and so leave scent behind him, which, however, the stream will convey a great way. He will even take 'soil' (that is, water),

and then back upon his own trail, and lie fast in the covert he has just quitted. If forced to leave the stream at last, he will make an effort, as Surgeon Collyns and the veterans are well aware, to reach the sea. As they reach the cliffs, they see below them their quarry, dripping from his recent bath, standing proudly on a rock surrounded by the flowing tide, and watching his pursuers with anxious eyes. 'The hounds bay him from the land; one adventurer from the pack takes the water, and already is at the base of the cliff on which the deer stands. Poor victim! Scarce has he lifted himself from the waves, when he is dashed again by an unerring blow, struck quick as lightning by the forefoot of the deer, and floats a corpse in the waters from which a moment ago he emerged.' Endeavours to dislodge the stag from his stronghold are at last successful, and dashing through the water, he reaches the cliffs. But it is evident his race is nearly run. The heavy gallop, the faltering stride, the lowered head, proclaim that his strength is failing. The check has increased his stiffness, though it has enabled him to regain his wind. 'His pursuers are not to be baffled, and their speed now exceeds his. He is unable again to face the open, runs feebly and painfully along the beaten paths, and turning through the woods towards the sea, he reaches the edge of the cliff just above the boat-house and beach of Glenthorne. His foes are close behind. He gives one wild and hurried look of fear, and dares the desperate leap. It is done. He has jumped from a height of at least thirty feet on to the shore, and in the next moment is floating in the salt sea-waves. Fortunately, one or two sportsmen on the beach keep back the eager hounds, or some of the best of the pack would in all probability be sacrificed, or at least maimed in the attempt to follow their quarry in his deed of daring. A few minutes suffice to man a boat, and put a rope round the horns of the deer. The victim is dragged in triumph to the beach, the knife is at his throat, and amid the baying of the pack, and the loud whoo-whoops of the crowd, the noble and gallant animal yields up his life.'

Then come the ceremonies of baptising Tyros, and of presenting the slots or forefeet to such as have earned those trophies. The head is severed and borne home in triumph, to adorn the hall of the master; and when the deer has been cleaned, and the hounds 'blooded;' when those who have assisted at the capture have been remunerated, and directions have been given for the disposal of the venison—to the best parts of which due honour will be done next week at a meeting of all the gentry and farmers of the country-side—the horses are sought for, the slackened girths again drawn, and all seek the nearest hostel, to refresh themselves and 'gruel' their good steeds. From the Rouse to the Finish, the wild deer will run from twenty to forty miles over that difficult country, so that horse and man have generally enough to do: the knife having even sometimes accomplished its deadly work by candle-light. The activity of the deer is indeed prodigious; and even a hind has been known to leap, and that up-hill, a wall of fifteen feet high. The tenderness of the female for its young is almost human; which cannot be said of the stag, who hates and dreads in his male offspring a future rival. When disturbed by hounds, the hind and calf dart away side by side, and trust to their speed for safety. If followed, however, the calf of course soon becomes fatigued, yet still the mother continues by its side, and accommodates her pace to that of her protégé. Then suddenly and unaccountably, the calf disappears, as if by magic. In a moment, on finding a convenient spot for her purpose, the hind thrusts the calf into the fern, or into a furze bush, and standing near until the hounds come close to her, she again gallops off, leaving the helpless creature fast nestled in its hiding-place. Affection between stags even is not altogether unknown. Two twins* ran together for nearly eight miles, but being much pressed, parted company, probably for the first time in their lives, when one of them was run into and killed. So certain was the forester that the survivor would have pined and died for want of his companion, that he urgently requested that the pack might be laid on the other twin the next hunting morning, which was accordingly done, notwithstanding there were better stags in the neighbourhood.

On the North Devon coast, it is not an unfrequent sight during the season to see the deer *at sea*, with five or six couple of hounds in full pursuit. On one occasion, a single hound leaped boldly on the creature's back, and was carried out a league. But the most exciting chases of all are those wherein a foreign element—that of the pirate or sea-robber—is introduced. Venison is good in the eyes of all mankind, including the mariner; and if a trader happen to be off-shore in the Bristol Channel when a stag takes to salt-water there, a boat is pretty sure to be lowered, and a second chase to commence before the eyes of the baffled hunters on the beach. If a village be near at hand, boats are despatched on the part of the latter also, and an impromptu regatta takes place, of which the prize is the deer. Most commonly, however, the interlopers have it all to themselves; they throw a rope round the antlers of the astonished animal, and notwithstanding the free use made by the gentlemen in pink of 'the woman's weapon,' hoist him on deck, and with three cheers of derisive exultation, trim their sails, and away before the wind to sell him at Cardiff—or perhaps they salt him down, and eat him at sea.

Not even the game-laws of the Conqueror could have contemplated such a proceeding as this; nor do we know whether the proper place to try such offenders would be the Old Bailey or the Admiralty Court.

THE MONTH:

SCIENCE AND ARTS.

The International Exhibition is now a month old: the keen edge of curiosity is somewhat worn, and first impressions have had time to grow into sober judgments; but whatever be the opinion as to details, the general effect as a spectacle is admitted to be satisfactory. Some hundreds of foreigners have come and gone; many of the season-ticket holders have satisfied the desire of their eyes, and the great stream of English folk is beginning to set towards Kensington, to view the feats of invention, the improvements of industry, and the embodiments of genius which have accumulated since that year of promise 1851. The Exhibition of the Royal Academy, and Frith's marvellous picture of the Railway Station—a subject to which we mean to return—have had their share of attention, along with the usual May Meetings. Thus, what with fine weather, and troops of money-spending visitors, London looks something like its best.

Science, profiting by the time of year, is, so to speak, taking stock. The Microscopical Society have held their soirée, and the Photographic Society theirs: the one shewing proofs of animal and vegetable tissues coloured by absorption during growth, and the wonderful microscopic writing-machine which writes the entire Bible twenty-two times within the space of a square inch; the other exhibiting sun-pictures

* Mr Scrope—a great authority upon deer—pronounces that the female never bears more than one calf at a time, but this Mr Collyns denies: in the case in question, a most trustworthy harbourer beheld the twins immediately after birth, saw them suck the mother, and constantly watched them as they grew up.

which have almost the effect of excellent painting, but not yet prepared with a solution of the problem how to take photographs of landscapes and objects in the natural colours. Niépce St Victor is working at it in Paris with that perseverance which never despairs of ultimate success. The College of Physicians and other learned bodies, desiring to shew hospitality to the foreigner, are planning conversazioni, following the two which have been held at Burlington House by General Sabine, President of the Royal Society. At those gatherings, the objects exhibited are usually of a very interesting character, and more or less scientific. Visitors curious as to the effects of artillery had opportunity to inspect a collection of fragments of ships' armour-plates, of broken bolts and distorted shot, sent from Shoeburyness: all very remarkable, as illustrative of the way in which iron breaks up under a sudden violent blow—an instructive study to a natural philosopher. The appearance of a conical shot after firing is truly surprising, as the piece of metal spreads out into a form resembling the stump of an old besom; the explanation of which is said to be that, when the centre of the cone is stopped by the striking of the point against the target, the surrounding portions continue to move forward, and by sliding over the centre as a core, produce the form above described. Models of iron ships were also to be seen, as also of docks; rare plants, including the cinchona from Kew; and illustrations of ethnology, among which was a series of the remains of the ancient Lake inhabitants of Switzerland, instructively classified by Mr H. Christy, whose reputation as an ethnologist is widely known.

Geologists are talking about a discovery which has introduced an extraordinary fossil into their collection, and extraordinary facts into their science. About a year ago, a German palæontologist discovered in the lithographic slate at Solenhofen a large part of the skeleton of an animal, which, on careful examination, was found to shew impressions of feathers. Doubts were raised; but the slab in which the fossil is imbedded has been examined by the ablest observers, and they all pronounce it to be the remains of some four-footed creature that had feathered wings and feathers on its tail. It is the first and only instance of the kind hitherto met with; and as it appears fatal to a long-established conclusion, it excites no little interest. How shall the strange animal be classed? is the question. Among birds or reptiles? No satisfactory answer can as yet be given; and Professor Wagner proposes to name the creature *Griphosaurus*, a term which embodies the Greek word for enigma: the same gentleman suggests that the so-called footprints of birds found in the trias, which have so long puzzled geologists, may be in fact the tracks of this newly discovered saurian. Hermann von Meyer says: 'This discovery is an event of so much importance in palæontology, that it calls for the most thorough investigation. The animal,' says he, describing the fossil, 'is abundantly endowed with feathers.* It possesses a long tail, has three toes; on the anterior limbs there is a fan of feathers, and also on the tail, on which the feathers radiate, not from the last vertebra, but laterally along the vertebræ. The simple tarsus of itself shews that this animal does not belong to the Pterodactyles, and the formation of the tail contradicts the idea, that we connect with our birds, yet the feathers are not distinguishable from those of birds.' Meyer further proposes to name the specimen *Archæopteryx lithographicus*. Professor Wagner, in closing his description, takes pains to argue that the newly discovered fossil in nowise supports the Darwinian hypothesis: that it is not 'an intermediate creature, engaged in the transition from the saurian to the bird.'

* One of the feathers is figured in the last number of the *Annals of Natural History*.

Sir Benjamin Brodie has just published the second part of his *Psychological Inquiries*; in which the hypothesis above referred to is one of the many questions embraced in the physical and moral history of man which are brought on for discussion. The veteran baronet admits that certain modifications or transformations of the animal structure can and do take place: but he shews, on the other hand, that certain organs are special, and appear to have no prototype; such as the fangs and poison-secreting glands of venomous snakes; the electric battery of the torpedo; and the spinning apparatus of the spider. Speaking through one of his interlocutors, he says: 'You may conclude this, that the thing is so far beyond the limits of my experience, and that in whatever way I look at it, I find the question so beset with difficulties, that I cannot venture to form any opinion on the subject.'

A magnificent telescope, with a mirror eighty centimetres in diameter, silvered by M. Foucault, was mounted about four months ago in the Imperial Observatory at Paris, and rigorously tested, according to the requirements of modern astronomy. The instrument came out of the trial satisfactorily, but so much delay was occasioned by waiting for propitious nights, that M. Leverrier and his aids are convinced that the climate of Paris is unsuitable to optical instruments of very high power. They have therefore resolved that the Foucault telescope, with other large refractors, shall be established in an observatory somewhere in the south, where advantage may be taken of the full power of the instruments. We notice it here as a solace to students of astronomy in this country, who have so often to lament the prevalence of unfavourable weather.

Mr Fairbairn's paper 'On the Law of Expansion of Superheated Steam,' read last month before the Royal Society, gave rise to an unusually interesting discussion. This kind of steam—dry steam, as engineers call it—is produced by an elevation of temperature to 500 or 600 degrees, in which condition it rushes into the cylinder with the ordinary steam, and effects an economy of one-third in the cost of fuel. Another advantage is, that it keeps the sides of the cylinders dry, and prevents the accumulation of water which, as practical men are aware, is detrimental to the working-power of the engine. With respect to a lubricant for facilitating the movement of the piston within the cylinder, it appears that the long-desired substitute for grease is at length discovered, namely, paraffine. In condensing engines, an unusual corrosion of the boilers is sometimes noticed, which arises from the acid vapours of the grease passing over with the condensed steam. With paraffine this objection is entirely avoided; moreover, paraffine, and the class of hydrocarbons to which it belongs, are not destructible by high temperatures, as grease and oil are, but retain their lubricating properties unimpaired. This is a fact which ought to be widely known, especially as superheated steam is likely to be taken into use to a much greater extent than it now is. Let it be well understood that paraffine resists the action of intense heat, and the employers of steam-engines will have at command an important economical element. This property of paraffine may be made serviceable in another way: in experimenting on high temperatures in glass tubes. Oil vapourises and obscures the observation; while with paraffine the transparency remains unblemished.

From recent experiments with heavy artillery, it is becoming apparent, so far as is yet demonstrable, that the size of guns cannot be increased at pleasure. It was thought, not long since, that the bore might be of any diameter, provided the thickness of metal were increased in proportion. But to this there seems to be a limit, for with very large charges of powder, the quantity of highly heated gases developed is so great, and the quality so energetic, that the metal gives

way. From this point of view, it would appear that the larger the gun, the more likely it is to burst.

For some months past, an ice-making machine has been in operation in Westminster, which effects its purpose cheaply and quickly, by an ingenious process. Sea-water, as most readers know, does not freeze at the temperature of 32 degrees, as fresh water does. Advantage is taken of this fact in the following way. A number of flat, square metal boxes, filled with fresh water, are placed within an air-tight chamber, around which a constant circulation of sea-water goes on, which, by the evaporation of ether, has been reduced in temperature below the freezing-point. This circulation chills all the boxes, and freezes the fresh water into hard solid squares, fit for any use to which ice is commonly applied. A small steam-engine connected with the apparatus maintains a vacuum in the chamber, and condenses the ether, which thus is made to do its work of refrigeration over and over again with but little loss; not more, as we hear, than about eighteenpence a day.

Another achievement has been made in operative chemistry, which deserves notice, because of the many useful applications of which it is capable, as was fully explained in a paper read before the Society of Arts by the inventor, Mr Frederick Walton. The achievement consists in a process by which india-rubber can be produced and manufactured from linseed oil. This oil is plentiful and cheap. We import as much linseed every year as will yield about 60,000 tons of oil, and this, when converted into artificial india-rubber, would be saleable at about half the price of the real article. A notion of the process may be formed by persons who have noticed that linseed-oil when spilt dries in a thin, tough film, and that a similar film forms on the surface of a quantity of the oil when left for a time undisturbed. Mr Walton takes a mass of these films, mixes a small portion of shell-lac therewith, crushes them, subjects them to a course of rolling at a high temperature, and so produces a substance which closely resembles india-rubber, and is applicable to as great a variety of purposes as caoutchouc itself, and to many of those for which gutta-percha is now used. To notice but a few of its applications: we find clothing, water-proof sheets, tarpaulings, carriage-fittings, saddlery, imitation leather, shoes and boots, printers' blankets, tubing, tank-lining, ship-sheathing, knife and tool handles, picture-frames, and all the articles which are now fashioned of vulcanite and ebonite. The usual way of preparing the so-called American leather cloth involves a period of seven days; with this new substance, a much greater quantity of the cloth may be prepared in one day.

Another attempt has been made to send salmon to Australia, and where so much perseverance is manifested, we cannot doubt of eventual success. Meanwhile, the introduction and acclimation of English birds take their place among accomplished facts; and our colonists at the antipodes may now hear the songs and warblings which gladdened their ears in the days of their youth, and partake of such game as inhabits English preserves. As regards the llama, such prosperous results have been already achieved, that some of the colonial newspapers are predicting the time, about half a century hence, when the vast grazing-grounds of the interior shall be covered by millions of the animal, and the trade in llama wool exceed that in gold.

On our side of the globe, the work of acclimatising is still going on; and the attempts to repopulate the Thames and other rivers with fish are still active. In the course of a year or two, there will be satisfactory results to report, not only of rivers, but of places on the coast, and in Ireland, where the fisheries have sadly degenerated through the lack of intelligent supervision. M. Coste, too, perseveres with his zealous endeavours to multiply the food resources of France. In a note recently addressed to the Academy of Sciences, he points out the importance of having a severe law which may prevent the enormous waste of spawn which takes place, season after season, to such an extent, that, as he estimates, there is a loss every year, in soles, turbots, and brill, of more than two hundred millions. If all these could be reared, France should have as little fear of famine as England ought to have of invasion.

CREATURES OF THE NIGHT.

Poised on strong wings, with swift yet stealthy flight,
Low in the vale, fresh from the thick dark wood,
The pallid hunter of the gloomy night,
The pouncing owl, swoops upon its food.
His screech oft fills the waking child with fear;
From the day's grave it bursts with a wild moan,
Ill-omen to the superstitious ear,
That dreads in it the future sigh or groan
From friend or relative, whom death's grand night
Draws close around the curtain of the tomb,
To screen the eyes before the morning bright,
That in another world we feel will come.
Loud, as he rushes past, his pinions flap
And vibrate in the vapour-laden air;
He passes, leaving on the sense a gap,
A loss, than the dread presence worse to bear.

The glow-worm shines upon the bank's warm side,
As though the lesser stars in heaven had found
A mirror, that the darkness could not hide,
Wherein to see their faces on the ground.

Lo! through the early shadows of the night,
With webbèd hands that clutch the heated air,
The furry bat flits with uneven flight,
As in our life there comes a biting care;
Higher he soars when cloudless is the sky,
Quickly he turns upon his insect prey,
Through the dark grove of trees he loves to fly,
Shunning the faintest ray of parting day.
Strange is his voice, the mouse who apes the bird;
Rarely he utters his small squeaking cry,
By most unheeded, when perchance 'tis heard
In the soft silence as he hasteth by.

The cricket plays upon his horny thigh,
A reedy note with an untiring wing,
Nor wearies till the morning draweth nigh,
Nor ceases when the nightingale doth sing.
Not all the pleasing sounds the earth can yield,
Nor the spring music of the lusty year,
Can charm his bride, who hideth in the field,
As that shrill chirp he raiseth for her ear.
And thus to each is given his own delight,
That less'neth not the others' private joy,
And thus the world hath room, when used aright,
For all who will their special gifts employ.

K.

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